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January 11-17, 2018 | volume 24 | number 20

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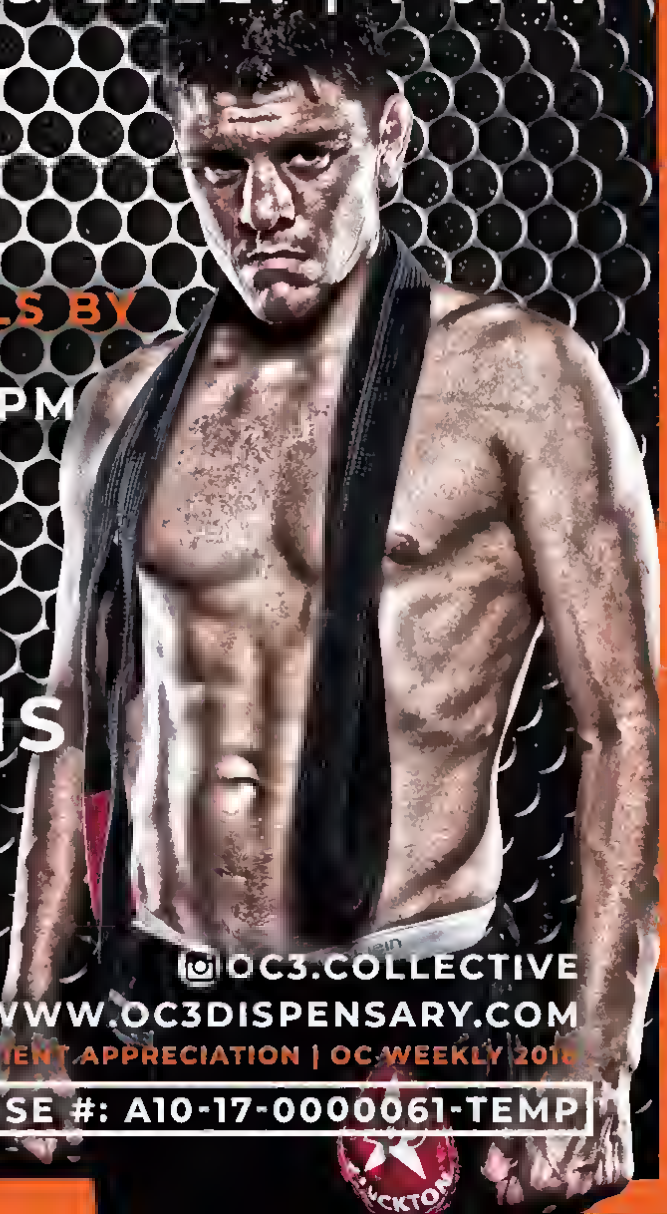

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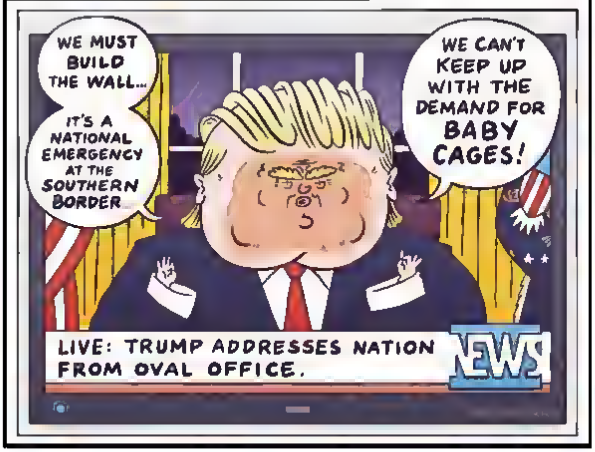
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NEWS

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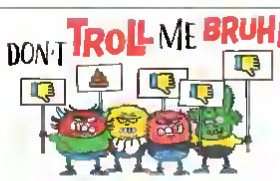

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From Honors Student to Armed Drug Dealer

Can Jonathan Chen escape SoCal's underworld after failed attempts?

Before bailiffs escorted Jonathan Chen from a holding cell into Superior Court Judge John D Conley's Santa Ana courtroom on Jan. 4, the 27-year-old's petite mother sat in the audience as close as permitted to the defense table. Her hands were gripped tightly in her lap, and her heart visibly raced underneath her tan sweater. When her youngest son—a 5-foot, 11-inch-tall, 150-pound fellow with an innocent face and endearing smile you wouldn't expect on an gun-toting narcotics trafficker—emerged, he wore an orange jail jumpsuit accessorized with silver behind-the-back handcuffs. The sight of each other caused her to nervously exhale while he closed his eyes and slightly nodded, unable to hide his embarrassment from the woman he considers his "guardian angel."

» R. SCOTT MOXLEY

The Orange County jail system, home to about 6,000 detainees, is dominated by low-income and poorly-educated individuals. That's not Chen's background. Born in Fountain Valley to Chinese immigrants, he grew up shy in a strict family dwelling in an upper-middle-class Irvine neighborhood bordering a scenic lake. He once earned a 4.0 GPA at one of that city's highly competitive high schools. Even now, when he writes, his penmanship is neat, his crisp sentences contain error-free grammar, and his ability to express lofty ideas, as well as agonizing personal critiques, are startlingly coherent for a young man who began to abuse substances at the age of 13.

When he sat at the defense table next to attorney Lloyd Freeberg Jr., Chen faced spending potentially 23 years in prison. After all, the crime spree had been bizarre and intense. During an eight-month period in 2016, police arrested him four times. In January of that year, he collected six criminal counts. A month after that, having been released on bail, he collected 12 more charges. In April, he added two more. The pattern continued in August, when Chen boosted the tally by five, landing at a total of 25 felony charges. He'd possessed heroin, cocaine, oxycodone, ecstasy, Xanax and methamphetamine for personal use and sale while carrying a concealed weapon.

PHOTOS COURTESY LLOYD FREEBURG JR.

It didn't help Chen's cause that during that spree, he was already an addict and convicted felon on parole. He'd gone from a nerdy student in middle school to shoplifting and marijuana use, thanks to a desire to fit in with the popular crowd. The downward spiral grew worse after a neighbor introduced him to a Los Angeles-based Asian gangster. In 2009, he and another teenager committed two home-invasion robberies of drug dealers they believed had stolen their product. He pleaded guilty, and Judge Gregory Jones sentenced an apparently contrite 18-year-old Chen to three years in state prison.

"I vividly recall [entering Wasco State Prison], all I could hear was people barking and yelling in the darkness," he told Conley. "No words can describe the feeling when the steel doors close you in. I began to hate myself. There was no reason anyone who, like me, had been afforded every possible opportunity to succeed should be in such a situation."

Because Chen says he had to focus on survival among veteran criminals inside the penitentiary, he wasn't able to confront his own "defects." He tried to keep clean after his release. But jobless and misguided, he sought desperate escapism in meth and resumed drug dealing to pay for his habit, moves that led to the most recent series of arrests.

Deputy District Attorney Sarah Rahman wanted to send Chen to prison for two decades. "This defendant had multiple priors as a juvenile," Rahman said. "He didn't reform. He went to prison. He didn't reform. ... He has a disregard for the law and the safety of others."

But Freeberg advocated that sending him back to prison would derail his client's impressive road to recovery during the past two years, as he has completed numerous drug-addiction programs. For example, Jeremy Camphell at the Monte Cristo Recovery Center in Santa Ana wants him to help other recovering addicts. Therapy has helped "him a great deal," Camphell advised the judge.

Freeberg reiterated the point, saying Chen "found the off-ramp before the dead end. ... I've never seen a client work so tirelessly and diligently."

Conley considered the arguments before addressing the defendant. "There are many pluses," the judge said. "There are also many minuses. You've accomplished a lot, Mr. Chen, but [the crime spree] can't be erased."

The judge acknowledged Chen's progress by ignoring what could have been six strikes with enormous prison consequences. He also stayed numerous potential punishments, citing "all the good things" Chen had done. At the end of the hearing, the judge ordered a prison term of 11 years and four months.

But that punishment will be less severe. Chen accumulated 3.5 years in-custody credits, and Conley tossed him another bone by recommending housing not in one of the state's penitentiary hellholes, but rather at a work or fire camp. "Thank you," the defendant quietly stated before deputies escorted him away. His mother wiped away tears.

RSCOTTMOXLEY@OCWEEKLY.COM

POLITICAL FOOTBALL

» STEVE LOWERY

Play-offs, Part 2

DALLAS COWBOYS VS. LOS ANGELES RAMS

Root for: Los Angeles. The Cowboys got to this round despite losing wide receiver Allen Hurns early in the game due to an injury—and by injury, we mean his ankle went all Looney Tunes twisted with his foot pointing in the wrong direction. It resembled something you might do to your GI Joe doll's feet before moving on to other areas that will forever scar Joe. It's not your fault, Joe, it's not your fault!

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

Root for: New Orleans. Of course, we all love New Orleans, but it's easy to forget what a cesspool it is. Philadelphia has a well-deserved reputation for being nasty and violent and miserable and mean, but it's got nothing on the place where bad decisions fall gently on the pavement like sorority-girl puke. The Big Easy is rife with Bad Decisions, whether it's wearing open-toed shoes in the French Quarter or me once choosing—at the insistence of a friend (thanks, Rick!)—to lay down in a chalk outline of a recent murder victim at 3 a.m. I have no idea what fluids I soaked up, but I'm fairly certain it stunted my growth ... and may have given me a smidge of cholera.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS VS. KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

Root for: Indianapolis. This is a really tough choice. Both cities are sneaky, hateful, racist bastions. Indiana and Missouri are southern states that just so happen to not be located in what we think of as the South—of course, thinking and the South have never been close friends. Missouri is the birthplace and breeding ground of Rush Limbaugh (oh, please, let him never breed), who is really Patient Zero for the kind of ethical and moral amnesia for conservative Christians who now embrace the cesspool that is Donald Trump. Evangelicals, who are so quick to judge others, have long admired Limbaugh, who claims he's smarter than everyone, but flunked out of college; claims the government goes too easy on drug abusers, but did not do serious time for his own drug abuse; and often claims conservatives have more claim to traditional, family values, though he's been married four times and divorced three. Sound familiar? Police would call this *grooming*. Americans call it *fucked*.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS VS. NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Root for: Los Angeles. Patriots suck.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

a clockwork orange »

» MATT COKER

MERCEDES OBI. REAL

LA Story

It's incredible what the Los Angeles Rams, who used to play in Anaheim, and Los Angeles Chargers, who are headquartered in Costa Mesa, accomplished this year (so far).

The Rams, whose only Super Bowl win came in 1999 (during those "lost" years in St. Louis), finished the 2018 regular season 13-3 for the best single season record in franchise history and the most wins ever while in Los Angeles.

The Chargers, who lost their only Super Bowl game in 1995 (during those "long" years in San Diego and after an 11-5 record), finished the '18 regular season 12-4 for the best single season since the franchise went 13-3 while in LA in 1960.

After a bye week, the Rams face the Dallas Cowboys in a divisional playoff game Saturday at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Having defeated the Baltimore Ravens 23-17 in the wild-card playoff round Jan. 6, the Chargers advance to face the New England Patriots at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts, on Sunday.

Parity on the field has not extended to the stands, however.

The Rams first came to LA a decade after the franchise started in Cleveland in 1936. Home games were played at the Coliseum until 1960, when the Rams moved to the reconfigured Anaheim Stadium where they stayed until the 1995 season in St. Louis. They returned to LA and the Coliseum in 2016.

As one of the original American Football League teams, the Chargers began playing at LA Coliseum in 1960, but the franchise moved to San Diego the following season. They returned to LA and what was then the StubHub Center (and now Dignity Health Sports Park) in Carson in 2017.

Both teams move into the brand-new Los Angeles Stadium at Hollywood Park in 2020, but because that project began with the Rams and on team owner Stab Kroenke's land, the Chargers are essentially a second-class team.

While the Rams have packed the Coliseum, attendance has been so light in Carson that some NFL team owners wonder if the Chargers will even be viable in La-La Land.

The second-class status is evident in this weekend's playoff games. According to TickPick, a no-fee secondary ticket marketplace, the Rams-Cowboys contest is the most expensive ticket of the round, with an average listing price of $831 and the cheapest at $378. For the Patriots-Chargers game, the average listing is $658, with $212 the cheapest.

The Chargers do have a hail Mary when it comes to securing SoCal popularity: Just win the Super Bowl, and if it's over the Rams, all the better.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Domestic Disturbance

BOB AUL

You were the cop who rang the bell and knocked on my door early on a weekday morning. You were out on a domestic disturbance call, you said, and wanted to make sure everything was okay. Behind you were two police cars, ready to handle what was surely a volatile situation. Except you were at the wrong house. I let you know the male voice yelling loudly probably came from one of the houses on either side of mine. They yell a lot, I told you, but it was probably coming from *that* house this time. You looked a bit confused and concerned, but you left anyway. I hope you did find the source of the disturbance, and I hope you did talk to him—just as loudly as he "talks" to his kids.

HEY, YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey You!" c/o *OC Weekly* 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com.

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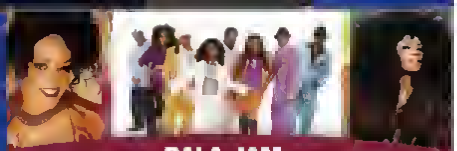

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TIME TO SHINE

FOUR FINGER RING FINO SUCCESS IN HIP-HOP TOGETHER AS ONE

BY NATE JACKSON
PHOTOS BY JOHN GILHOOLEY

The members of Four Finger Ring know what it's like to be lost. Prior to joining forces as though they were the Voltron of OC hip-hop two years ago each one was on a path paved with disarray and self-destruction. As they wandered the halls of their own private purgatories, shadow boxing with demons of doubt and depression was a daily routine A decade into their careers as respected OC rappers bred the type of frustration that comes from giving all of yourself to something without being sure it could ever love you back.

Sure, hip-hop had given them a purpose, some loyal fans, countless tours and modest success However, by their mid-30s, the light at the end of the tunnel of paid dues still seemed out of reach.

It felt almost as dark as the trip we recently took through their downtown Santa Ana headquarters. But instead of swallowing them whole, this new recording studio gives them more life than they could've imagined. Flicking on his phone's flashlight app, rapper Nu3tron shines a beam of light through the shadows. His cohorts—Mic Moses, C4MULA and DJ Zole—trail behind him single file through endless twists and turns and up three flights of stairs in a 30,000-square-foot structure that from the outside resembles a plain office building. But when the house lights finally come on, it's as if we've landed in a random episode of *MTV Cribs*

"It's like the fun factory," says Moses. "This place is insane. You'll never find a place like this ever It's crazy because of all that stuff going on, so it creates a vibe unlike any place I've ever worked in before."

Humming fluorescent bulbs reveal a wing of the building that's been transformed into an indoor-turf soccer field. A few steps to the right, and you run into a mini basketball court that sits catty-corner to a steam room and jacuzzi that are under construction. A restaurant-sized kitchen and dining area with a mezzanine overlooks the field From the rooftop, you get a decent view of downtown. Rows of empty offices for now double as storage space, rehearsal rooms and apartment-style living quarters Next door to the studio run by their label, Lip Drum Entertainment, is a commercial-quality production studio with a green screen stretched to the ceiling, hinting at the building's former life as a TV news studio in the '70s

Though it's impossible to walk through Four Finger Ring's new digs without a slack-jawed sense of awe, the building was in a postapocalyptic state of disrepair before it was taken over by Lip Drum and two other investment partners, each of which has businesses inside the building.

"Before we got here, homeless people would break into the basement and sleep in here," Nu3tron says. The inside of the building—which lies in the shadow of Santa Ana's Civic Center, the Men's Jail and Ronald Reagan Federal Courthouse—feels worlds away from anything resembling the slate-gray oppression of the judicial system as the space continues to evolve

"It's an active construction site," Nu3tron says pointing to the soccer field. "One day, I showed up here, and this used to be a concert hall area with a couple of basketball hoops, and then the next day, it was an indoor soccer field. So things around here change really fast."

The plans for a luxurious site are moving almost as fast as Four Finger Ring's momentum, as their quartet of veteran artists begin to break out.

In the past decade, few rappers have dedicated themselves to OC's hip-hop scene more than C4MULA, Nu3tron, Mic Moses and DJ Zole Each of them has been rocking in various crews, labels and groups since the early aughts. In 2016, their collective focus began to change. Their journey as a group brought all four of their styles to the world, melding into one cohesive sound, they bridge the gap between early millennium backpack rap and today's alchemy of trap, pop and dance music.

"I think we gave an option to kids who don't wanna conform to the sound of now because it's being forced down their throat," Zole says. On any given day, the group's monster turntablist and producer looks the part of a metal guitarist with his brown, back-length hair and wooly face.

With their amazing, three-story fun house in Santa Ana, the group went from local status to brushes with viral fame, rapping for huge crowds and working with respected artists ranging from '90s hip-hop legends the Dove Shack to Huntington Beach darlings the Dirty Heads However far they're destined to go with Four Finger Ring, their bond as friends is what gets them through the toughest times. True-life tales of jail time, drug addiction, depression and near-death experiences permeate their rhymes amidst polished hooks and party jams Their sound doesn't need to look anywhere but inward for an identity The determination of this lifelong crew allows their music to keep punching forward until their knuckles are bloody and a dent is made.

"It's not too complicated," rapper C4MULA says. "It's not us thinking about what's the next hit song it's hearing a beat and releasing our skills. It's us saying, 'fuck it' and putting our hearts on our sleeve for the world to hear. If they like it, they like it; if they don't, they don't."

As much as they utilize the inside of their recording space, plenty of their creativity occurs outside it. They routinely gather on the steps of the studio's courtyard, where ideas are formed between cigarette puffs and vape clouds. During daily breaks between marathon recording and mixing sessions for songs for their recent mixtape *Neverland* and forthcoming album *Monsters Under the Bed* (out Friday), transients, druggies, skaters, and suit-and-tie business people dart past them. What started as a handful of tracks on their 2018 debut full-length *We Are the Four* grew into a nearly 100-song catalog and a constant stream of videos One of their latest, a video for the song "WiFi," garnered more than 20,000 views in less than 24 hours. Part of the reason, other than teaming up with Lip Drum label head Mike "Games" Mussallam for an extra marketing push, is the organic following they each earned as MCs. The strength they have as a group derives from not letting any prior success come between them.

"I think the reason why there's not as many groups nowadays is because of the trust factor and egos and narcissism," C4MULA says "Because your ego is so big that you can't share a room with other motherfuckers and their ideas. Some of us have learned how to build collective ideas without shouting or shooting one another."

It's a mentality that goes deeper than rap and certainly deeper than their current project. Starting in the early 2000s, the Four Finger Ring MCs have grown up together in the scene as part of an era in OC hip-hop that birthed a Zulu Nation-style consortium dubbed Committee Fam. Under the Committee's umbrella, members of various groups, chques and crews would come together regularly to chill, beatbox, battle rap and plan hip-hop events around the county At the time, Lip Drum founder Games was just another talented beatboxer who was granted entrée into the group, he eventually became one of the three chief members.

"We used to hold these meetings in the park—there'd be, like, 40 of us, all the other chques and crews," Games says. "We'd have a little jar go around and collect like $47 between 50 dudes and drink 40s and smoke blunts in the park in Orange off Prospect."

Now 40 years old, Games has retired from performing, but he used money from his business ventures in marketing to fund a label that could help support some of the artists he grew up with, especially C4MULA. Known for the ability to eviscerate crowds and rival MCs with his caustic bars and stoner wit, Gaines saw the lanky, bespectacled rapper born Andrew Bowman as a special talent he could build around. At the time, however, C4MULA was signed to United Family Music, a label run by Johnny Richter of Kottonmouth Kings, the two parted ways before the label eventually shuttered.

"I created [Lip Drum] with the idea that I needed to get behind C4," Games says, sporting a ballcap and chain inside a conference room at the Lip Drum lab "He's too ill, too dope, but people hadn't gotten behind him the right way."

At the time, though, C4MULA's problems were the result of the rapper getting in his own way Years of hard drug use, dealing, incarceration and a bout of homelessness derailed his life to the point that Gaines made a decision to take C4MULA under his wing and let him crash at his house in Costa Mesa. C4MULA's drug addiction had him turning to petty crimes to support his habit and living in his car.

"I had a sleeping bag, a blanket and a gun," C4MULA remembers. "My gun was my last resort to get dope or use it however, according to the situation. There were times when I either wanted to rob somebody or blow my fuck-

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OCWEEKLY ORANGE COUNTY'S LEADING SOURCE OF NEWS, CULTURE, AND ENTERTAINMENT

Time to Shine

» FROM PAGE 9

ing brains out. It was crazy, bro; I was a crazy person."

In the summer of 2017, they staged an intervention with C4MULA and his family, then helped him into a 30-day rehab facility in Colorado.

For Gaines, part of Four Finger Ring's early appeal was their ability to bring some support to a talented guy who was clearly at the end of his rope. "Even though I love the music and chemistry that Moses, Nu3tron and Zole bring to the table, another huge attribute they bring is that support and the brotherhood, so it's a win-win-win-win-win," Gaines says.

"I always used to think people who are your friends are back scratchers—you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours," C4MULA says. "But when I didn't have shit, these dudes had me covered. They literally picked me up outta the gutter."

In the era of social-media hype and celebrity of the "Yungs" and "Lils" of the world, the hip-hop group isn't what it used to be—and neither are a lot of the personal connections between rappers that bonded it together. The mythical conglomerate of the hottest lyricists from the same neighborhood who drift together at just the right time is the template the members of Four Finger Ring knew.

"We used to have discussions about this shit growing up—'which member of Wu-Tang or Bone Thugs is better' type of shit—and we're getting comments like that on our videos now," says Moses, the calmest, most even-keeled of the crew despite his insanely fast rapping style.

Nu3tron's melodic hooks and confident, punk-rock swagger; Moses' rapidfire bars; and C4MULA's tortured, talented lyricism are stirred together by Zole's soulful beat production. Bombastic new songs such as "Lucky" and "Fuck Your #ashTag" could fill a stadium whereas emotional tracks such as "Raven" and "HARRP" (a song for the victims of 2018's natural disasters around the globe) are more suited for bumping on a long, contemplative car ride home.

These are the kind of records Nu3tron has always strived to make, from his days as the front man of the rock group Capital Kill to his years spent as a solo artist and a member of rap duo LD and Ariano's HB-based Technicali crew circa 2007. Back then, his aspirations were only matched by his work ethic and need to reach people the old-fashioned way, through hand-to-hand CD sales at shows and festivals. That eventually carried over to his U.S. and European tours, during which he's still adamant about meeting fans and having more real interactions, though it's a lot easier now that he doesn't have to push his music on people.

"I remember sitting back at [hip-hop festival] Rock the Bells and looking at all the people with my $800 worth of CDs, and I waited until right after the Visionaries performed because I had a track with [rapper] LMNO on it, and I realized that's nothing," he says. "There's, like, 60,000 people at this thing, and I didn't even get 2 percent of the people here. Nowadays, we're attacking virally versus back in the day, when we used to do a lot more footwork."

Part of the success can be attributed to their often being booked on the cannabis concert circuit. Whether it's converting stoned lackadaisical crowds into fans at Hempfest in Seattle or rocking shows such as Kush Stock in LA, their ability to make friends with West Coast legends who headline these events is effective. For example, after performing at a recent cannabis event headlined by Dogg Pound rapper Kurupt, Zole was approached by Bo-Roc of '90s G-funk group the Dove Shack at a nearby gas station. "Zole was getting some snacks at the cash register, and this huge black guy comes up behind him and says, 'Yo, homie, are you from Four Finger Ring? What's your name?'" Nu3tron remembers. "He said, 'I didn't even need gas; I just saw y'all at the show, and you fuckin murdered it, and then I saw you here, so I stopped and wanted to give you props!'"

Bo-Roc asked for their number and took a pic with them. "Then this other guy who was a fan of his came up behind us and said, 'Yo, lemme get your number!'" Moses remembers. "And he *just* took a picture, and he goes, 'Yeah, sorry my phone's dead, dawg.' And jumps back in his car!"

That wouldn't be the last time the group encountered the West Coast legend. Shortly after that, Bo-Roc invited the group to perform with him at Kush Stock, where the Dove Shack were headlining. When Four Finger Ring showed up, festival security refused to allow them to park in the artist lot. One call to Bo-Roc, and the rapper was yelling at security to let his new homies inside. "Bo-Roc got in his face, and he banged on

him, 'Do you know who I am? I'm fucking Bo-Roc. This is my shit; I'm headlining this motherfucker. Open the fucking gate!'" Moses says.

Before they knew it, the members of Four Finger Ring were backstage, trading blunts with the Dogg Pound. "I never had nobody bang on someone like that; not even my tight homies would do that shit for me," Nu3tron says from a couch in their recording studio, his tattooed hands and ring-covered knuckles gesturing wildly as he tells the story. "That's what blew my mind!"

Aside from making friends with West Coast legends, Four Finger Ring have also been able to lean on members of their OC circle who have gone on to bigger things. On *Monsters Under the Bed*, the track "Lucky" was produced by LD (now known as the longtime DJ for Sublime With Rome). "Fuck Your "#ashtag" was produced by Ariano, and tattooed stoner-rap captain Chucky Chuck signed on to rap a verse on "No Guys No Glory." The 2018 single "Stay Cool" features vocalist Jared Watson of the Dirty Heads and was produced by Jim Perkins at Roshambo Sound.

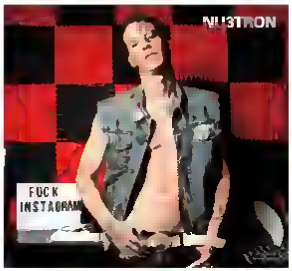
The competitive nature of hip-hop and OC music, in general, leads some artists to become haters or refuse to be supportive of one another's craft. But the ones who wind up being the most successful are those who are the most down to support their fellow local artists. "The people who really wanna work will fly with you and walk into the depths of hells with you," Zole says. "We don't wanna necessarily keep OC the way it was when we came up in it, but keep Orange County vibing and positive. When the 'OC hip-hop scene' comes up, sometimes there's a question mark associated with it like, 'What do you mean "OC hip-hop"?' But there's been a scene here for decades."

As the founding member of the award-winning, OC-based hip-hop crew Speach Impediments (the mayor of Placentia once gave them a key to the city), Zole was the backbone and the sound of the group, which started in 2003. As the group progressed, he blossomed into a touring DJ for national acts and was eventually picked up by revered hip-hop label Rhymesayers. He deejayed around the world, with an average of 200 shows per year, for the likes of Abstract Rude, Atmosphere and Brother Ali. Though that might sound like the apex for any DJ out of Fullerton, Zole (born Kevin Boyd) was quickly losing himself in a spiral of drugs and alcohol, similar to what was happening to C4MULA. Around January 2011, things got even worse with the death of a friend from a drug overdose.

"I was a mess," Zole recalls. "I stuck around on the tour circuit, sometimes not even showing up to shows and just taking the money, getting on a plane and partying in some other spot. But I was getting ready to dump it all."

Around that time, he'd accepted a recording-engineer job in South Korea. As he was preparing to pack his bags and leave OC behind, he started getting calls from his longtime friends and current group mates. Zole thanks Games and Four Finger Ring for leading him home to OC, his recovery and a reassessment of his career in hip-hop.

"I'm not even close to the dude I was before," he says. "It was killing my career, and it was killing me. I was in psychiatric clinics, and I couldn't contain my life. I was a lost cause, I was done, and these guys saved my life. I can't and chose not to do anything career-wise without these guys. If I cut my skin open, I'll bleed 4s."



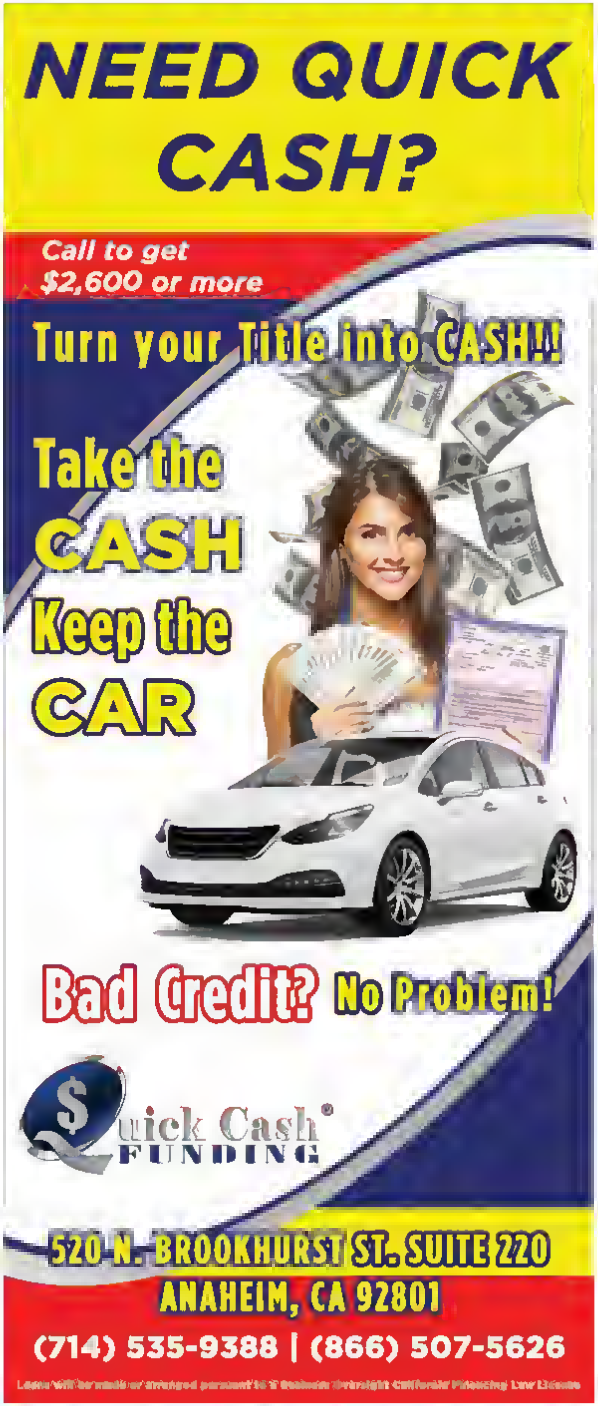
As the group prepares for their album to drop, the years they've spent starting over are now paying off. Poised to deliver a project that will introduce them to the world is only part of it. Being the hip-hop lifers they are, the combined strength of their convictions allows them to enjoy what they're doing, regardless of the outcome.

"From the very beginning, when we decided to be a group, Nu3tron and I talked about it, and that was the main thing," Moses says. "We said, 'Okay, this time, let's just have fun with it. Fuck all the other shit—just have fun, and all the other shit will come later. Let's not go in with any preconceived notions of other bullshit that's going on.'"

It seems to be working. The growth manifested through each song has Four Finger Ring living on the edge of every beat and enjoying every moment. Will it ever be perfect? Probably not, but more important is their fight to keep perfecting themselves. And they all understand they have a better chance of doing that together.

"It's about taking away the ego part and getting down to the nitty gritty of 'Is this a good song?'" Nu3tron says. "It depends on how you look at it; if you're the guy always trying to get your idea off, then it would work against you if you can't work with people. But I think that's what makes us beautiful. My goal when we're writing a new song is to make everybody have their moment."

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM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EMILY SHUR

fri/01/11

(CONCERT)

LOVE THE NAME
Fartbarf

Local cult faves Fartbarf are definitely working with a Devo influence, but it's very specific and precise. Remember the Devo guys in the blue jumpsuits and masks, confusing/torturing Ohio audiences with a bizarro version of "Secret Agent Man" circa 1976? It's that Devo DNA at work here, not the reined-in new wave of "Whip It." Back then, the weapons of choice were synthesizers, a self-created mythos and a deep devotion to the surreal...and that's how Fartbarf operates, too. Of course, we're living in the dark future Devo feared might come, so Fartbarf play heavier and hit harder. If you took their Neanderthal masks off, you might be able to put them next to high-adrenalin electronic experimentalists such as Holy Fuck. But if you took the masks off, would it even be Fartbarf? This trio is part man, part machine and part mutant monster—remove one, and it just isn't as fun.

Fartbarf at Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, martysonnewport.com. 11 p.m. Free. 21+. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

(THEATER)

The Show Must Go On
ShowOff! International Playwriting Festival

The annual theater and playwriting festival at Camino Real Playhouse is back, and the selection of seven 10-minute plays looks to be as captivating as ever. Playwrights from all over the world submitted works, and those chosen learned what it takes to produce attention-grabbing scripts in a short amount of time. Some of these plays take on comedy, drama, science fiction and mystery, and all are directed and performed by players from Orange County's theater scene. Make a point to stay after the show for the Insider's Circle, during which directors will do a Q&A with the audience.

ShowOff! International Playwriting Festival at Camino Real Playhouse, 31776 El Camino Real, San Juan Capistrano, (949) 489-8082, www.caminorealplayhouse.org. 8 p.m. Through Jan. 20. $20-$27. —AIMEE MURILLO

sat/01/12

(ART)

SAY HELLO
'Hello Welcome' Pop Art Show

The title really doesn't sum up or describe the greatness of the goings-on taking place at the "Hello Welcome" Pop Art Show, but it is a friendly introduction to some exciting events. Emerging and established artists based in and around Long Beach will showcase their work via 13 large-scale murals and a guest group art show that features Allison Bamcat, Erwin Papa, Jaime Guerrero, Kimo Bautista, Ron the Killer and others. Music performances by Dirty Merlin (member and founder of LB's prolific GRN+GLD), the Vespertines, CGAK and K0rbit0, drinks for sale, and raffle prizes round out today's celebration of distinguished local talent. Say "hello" to them all as they welcome you into their vibrant worlds.

"Hello Welcome" Pop Art Show at 625 W. Anaheim, Long Beach, hellowelcome.splashthat.com. 8 p.m. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

[MUSEUM EVENTS]

Rise Up!
'Chingonas: The Rise of a Chicana Pop Aesthetic'

If well-behaved *mujeres* rarely make history, leave it to *chingonas* to rally the revolution! With "Chingonas: The Rise of a Chicana Pop Aesthetic," the Museum of Latin American Art becomes the place to celebrate badass Latinas and all they do via *mucho* poetry, lectures, music, vendors and art-making. But an afternoon *plática* puts it all into perspective. Cal State Northridge professor (and *chingona* lowrider scholar) Denise Sandoval serves as moderator to artivist (that's activist + artist) Barbara Carrasco, Mi Vida Boutique's Noelle Reyes, Felicia Montes of Mujeres de Maiz and more. They'll be chatting about the rise of a Chicana pop aesthetic, the politics of Chicana and Chicanx identities, social media, and *chingona* history. If that all sounds intriguing, it's because *chingonas*, by definition, aren't boring!

"Chingonas: The Rise of a Chicana Pop Aesthetic" at the Museum of Latin American Art, 628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach, (562) 437-1689, molaa.org. 2 p.m. Free with museum admission ($7-$10). —GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

sun/01/13

[THEATER]

Town Heroes

Heroes of the West

The Wild West gets a feminist twist in April Brewster and Tahirih Moeller's campy comedy, directed by Dana Kerns and workshopped and produced by Up & Coming Actors, which provides resources for underrepresented artists to achieve professional results in creative worlds. In *Heroes of the West*, protagonists and gunslingers-in-training Betsy and Daisy become apprentices to town hero Hank, but they soon realize he's a narcissistic attention seeker and need to concoct a way to work with the douche-y bloke in order to save the town from an even worse villain—said every woman who has ever walked the face of the Earth.

Heroes of the West at Long Beach Playhouse, 5021 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 494-1014, www.lbplayhouse.org. 2 p.m. $15. —SR DAVIES

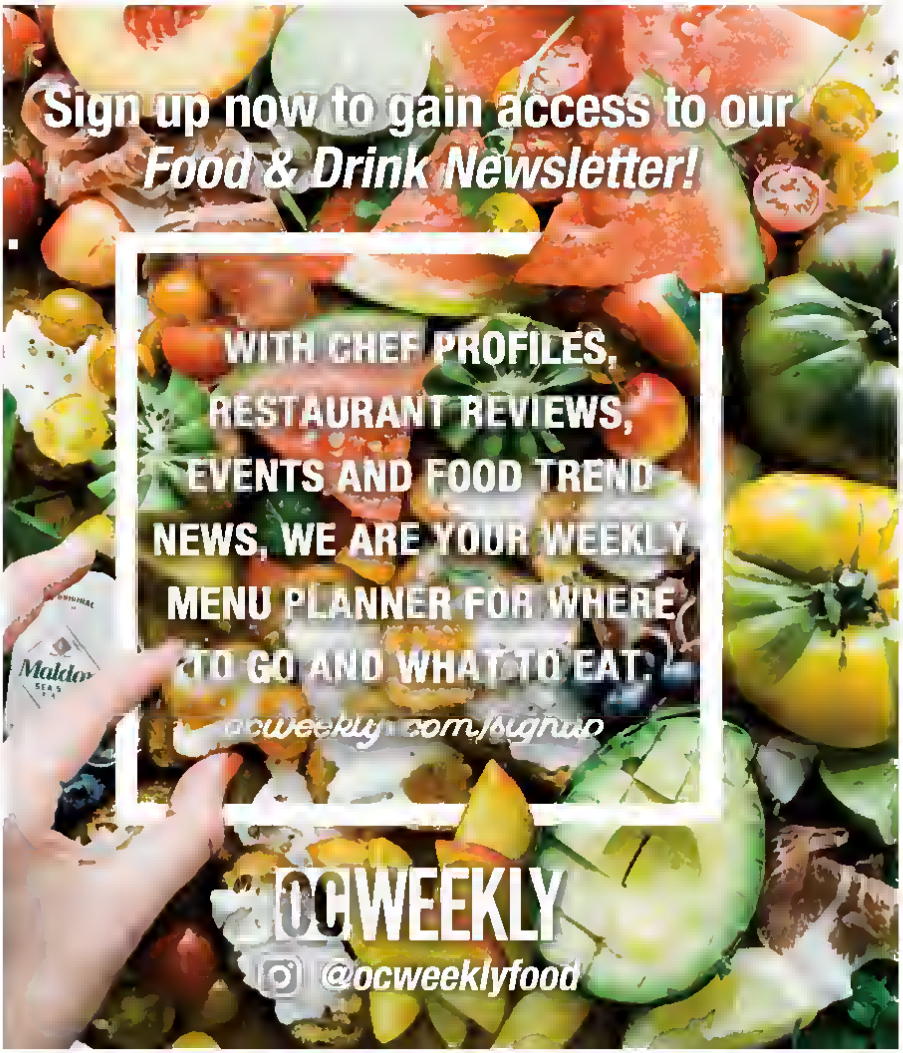
[CONCERT]

Loud Enough for You?

Winter West Fest

Now that we're all rested up from the holidays, it's time to gear up and get back to some extreme partying. Garden Amp is hosting punk bands Terror and Cro-Mags with some additional guests for a night of joyous mayhem. The LA-based Terror are well-known for their commitment to keeping hardcore music fun and uplifting, and Cro-Mags were pioneers, fusing hardcore punk with thrash metal. So, if you need a fix, look no further! Just remember not to get too banged up in the mosh pit, it's only January, and we've a long way to go!

Winter West Fest with Terror and Cro-Mags at Garden Amp, 12762 Main St., Garden Grove, (949) 415-8544, gardenamp.com. 5 p.m. $20. —SCOTT EEINBLATT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mon/01/14

[CONCERT]

Monday Night Rock

The Premonitions

Fancy yourself in a mood to brush off the early week woes and see a show? The Continental Room has you covered with an extremely fierce trio of bands. First up are the Premonitions, who slay any dullness in the room with their jangly garage rock, fuzzy reverb-tinged guitar, buoyant energy and electric rhythms. Same goes for DVLWND, a Riverside-based three-piece who have sent audiences sweeping up the standing-room area with their garage punk bangers. Hollow Fortyfives end the night with even more sweaty, '60s-infused punk.

The Premonitions, DVLWND and Hollow Fortyfives at the Continental Room, 115 W. Santa Fe Ave., Fullerton, (714) 526-4529, www.facebook.com/continentalroom. 9 p.m. Free. 21+ —AIMEE MURILLO

tue/01/15

[FILM]

Dark Times

Children of Men

Director Alfonso Cuaron is currently being heralded as one of the most intriguing and visionary filmmakers of our generation. And this month, the Frida Cinema pays tribute to his genius with screenings of his films, including the 2006 dystopian thriller *Children of Men*. In the flick, dapted from P.D. James' novel, the world faces extinction from a series of plagues and mass infertility, sending asylum-seekers to find refuge in a U.K. police state. Clive Owen plays a bureaucrat who has been kidnapped by a resistance faction to escort a young, pregnant refugee to safety. Catch this gripping sci-fi flick tonight.

Children of Men at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 285-9422, thefridacinema.org. 2:30, 5 & 8 p.m. $7-$10 —AIMEE MURILLO

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wed/01/16

[FOOD & DRINK]

CHEESE, PLEASE!

The Ultimate Cheese & Charcuterie Backyard Party

If your NewYear's resolution is to eat more cheese, this is your event. (And if it's not, well, kick rocks because we don't need that kind of negativity in our lives.) Five Crowns' SideDoor in Corona del Mar hosts a bi-annual cheese feast that brings together all the best *fromages* from its monthly small-batch creamery cheese series. Come early for the Cheese Education Class, led by SideDoor's professional cheesemonger, at which you'll learn all about different aging processes and types of cheese, then stay for the Cheese & Charcuterie Backyard Party to indulge in many a cheese and meat offering. Tickets to the party include a glass of wine, though, if you're like us, that won't be nearly enough.

SideDoor Presents the Ultimate Cheese & Charcuterie Backyard Party at Five Crowns, 3801 E. Coast Hwy., Corona del Mar, (949) 717-4322, www.sidedoorcdm.com. Cheese Education Class, 5 p.m. $25; Cheese & Charcuterie Backyard Party, 6 p.m. $65. 21+. —ERIN DEWITT

[CONCERT]

Dark Entries

Peter Murphy, 40 Years of Bauhaus

Fresh off being ejected from his own show—no, really, he was taken down by security in Stockholm—Peter Murphy brings to North America the next leg of his celebration of 40 years of Bauhaus. Hopefully, the City National Grove of Anaheim show won't involve any such exciting antics—which, in Stockholm's case, included the singer, reportedly miffed about the sound, tossing bottles of water into the crowd, apparently injuring some attendees. Murphy reunites with bassist David J to play a selection from the English band's catalog of Goth rock, including the *In the Flat Field* album in its entirety.

Peter Murphy, 40 Years of Bauhaus at City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 712-2700, www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com. 8 p.m. $40. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

thu/01/17

[FILM]

Boys In the Band

The Band's Visit

The 2007 forgotten arthouse comedy *The Band's Visit* offers the eccentric details of a musical tour of the Alexandria Ceremonial Police Orchestra, an Egyptian band who perform in full officer regalia. Here, a mistake in travel plans sends the group to the wrong drop-off location in Israel, and the Arab music-performing group find themselves in a place where they are not so welcome. Despite this, the band's conductor, Tewfiq, is focused on not letting this major hiccup on the road sour the experience, and along the way, new friends, experiences and characters make this an extremely warm and humorous excursion. The film is presented by local musician Jason Feddy for Laguna Art Museum's monthly Film Night series.

The Band's Visit at Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-8971; lagunaartmuseum.org. 6 p.m. Free with museum admission ($5-$7). —AIMEE MURILLO

[PERFORMING ARTS]

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

Evolution of a Sonero

Bronx native Flaco Navaja has used spoken-word poetry, music, comedy and theater to coalesce some of the cultural nuances of his Latinx heritage. When he's not acting on television, he's performing with his group the Razor Blades and doling out rhythms and sounds that harken back to his own musical upbringing in styles that include salsa, cumbia, and rock & roll. In this one-man show, written and directed by Navaja himself, the popular character actor plays memorable songs by the talents that influenced him most, from Janis Joplin to Manudo. In between, he discusses how these works and musicians paved the way for his own creative/self-discovery. Through *Evolution of a Sonero*, you'll gain new insight into Navaja's artistic inner workings.

Evolution of a Sonero at Segerstrom Center for the Arts' Samueli Theater, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2787, www.scfta.org. 8 p.m. Through Jan. 19. $25. 15+. —AIMEE MURILLO

MERCEDES DEL REAL

Teppanyaki Tacos

Descanso in Costa Mesa is like a Benihana that does tacos

BY EDWIN GOEI

All you need to know about Descanso can be described in these three words: *Benihana with tacos*. Not only does that succinctly encapsulate the entire concept, but it's probably also the elevator pitch the owner must've given the loan officer at the bank. Doing tacos in a teppanyaki-style restaurant is such a great idea it's a wonder no one has thought of it before.

Descanso, however, does hedge its bets. It doesn't offer this so-called "a la plancha" experience exclusively; it also has a regular dining area and a more casual taco bar for those who want to eat sans theatrics.

On one Saturday, I arrived with a noontime reservation I secured a week before, which turned out to be unnecessary. The plancha dining room—set up with four teppanyaki tables that seated 10 people each—was completely empty.

Before I started to feel lonely, the server showed up. She explained that eating at the plancha tables meant I'd be automatically opting for the prix fixe. The main entrée choices ranged from tacos to quesadillas to alambres. The cost of whatever I'd end up choosing would cover the entire meal. After she returned with chips, chicharrones and salsa, she took my main dish order as well as what I wanted as a first course.

I opted for the Mexican fried rice to start. But just as I was wondering whether the chef would do the old beating-heart trick when he made it, the fried rice came out on a small plate, precooked and zigzagged with a spicy aioli. It was decent fried rice—studded with tiny diced peppers, bits of Mexican squash and kernels of roasted corn—but I'd be lying if I didn't say I was disappointed it wasn't done in front of me, tableside.

The better first course, I discovered, is the fideo. This cup of savory tomato soup—with short segments of noodle, chunks of avocado and queso fresco—was something I would gladly order again on its own with or without the show.

Then the chef arrived, pushing a cart of ingredients. He introduced himself briefly and immediately got to work by swirling some butter onto the cooktop. He then plopped down on the griddle a single cootainer that held the diced onions, bell peppers, bacon and par-cooked bits of sirloin steak. This was the alambre I ordered.

He prodded it a few times, shook on some salt and pepper, and shoveled the mound around so that all of it made contact with the hot metal. He then took a fistful of shredded cheese and folded it into the now-steaming mass.

Another mound of cheese went directly onto the griddle itself. Before long, it melted into a puddle and began to bubble. When it got crispy, he scraped underneath it to release it from the cooktop, then flipped the whole thing over to cover the rest of the dish, which he'd already transferred to a waiting plate. He finished by adding four dollops of avocado salsa, some thinly sliced onion and a stack of flour tortillas he'd heated up on the side.

I took a spoonful of the alambre and tucked it into a tortilla. It left behind trails of cheese as though it were a deep-dish pizza, but it reminded me most of a Philly cheesesteak. Since it was so rich and dripping of grease (and I was already full from the chips), I could only make a tiny dent, but I'm already looking forward to the leftovers. I bet it will taste incredible between a baguette.

If you opt for the tacos, it will be served on some of Descanso's two-toned tortillas—unique specimens that resemble the yin-yang symbol. One side is made with blue corn masa and the other, white. The pollo asado taco is a particularly wonderful way to enjoy these tortillas. The chicken morsels are garnished with not only segments of orange, watercress and a jicama relish, but also crispy chicken skin.

As the chef was finishing up, I asked him what he did differently during dinner. He said that at dinner, the fried rice is made-to-order on the griddle along with sauteed vegetables. Also, the fideo soup and a dessert are included in the price, which is, by the way, about $10 more expensive than lunch.

The server later clarified the kitchen only does the precooked fried rice at lunch because of time constraints some customers have. This seemed disingenuous to me. If you were told there's a restaurant that's like a Benihana with tacos, would you go there, then ask them to rush through the experience?

DESCANSO
1555 Adams Ave., Ste. 103, Costa Mesa, (714) 486-3798, www.descansorestaurant.com. Open Sun.-Thurs., 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri.-Sat., 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Plancha lunch, $14-$25 per person, plancha dinner, $24-$35 per person. Full bar.

WHAT THE ALE
» GREG NAGEL

Trump and Putin On a Can

When coming up with concept beers, sometimes inspiration comes by way of current events, and when your hop allotment includes varietals from three continents, blend them together—just to see if they all get along.

Bootlegger's Brewery created an IPA called International Relations that's West Coast-ish in style, with caricatures of a baggy-suited President Donald Trump and a shirtless Vladimir Putin high-fiving each other while riding an elephant and a bear, respectively.

"The can art idea was just a fun way of doing a caricature of current international events happening," notes brewery owner Aaron Barkenhagen. "Since the hops are from other countries, we saw the opportunity for the tie-in."

The art was done by Stan Endo, a local artist who has done most of Bootlegger's art, including its logo.

I find it somewhat hilarious that a brewery would take a risk of alienating a percentage of its thin skinned clientele by making a political statement. After all, beer is what brings the community together, and having Trump pooting around a beer can label feels somewhat like a publicity stunt. (If you're reading this, it worked.)

Beyond the label, the beer itself is delicious. At 6.8 percent, it drinks like a zesty-tropical pale ale. Pick up a few cans for the bomb shelter; you might need it.

BOOTLEGGER'S BREWERY
696 Randolph Ave., Ste. B, Costa Mesa, (714) 871-2337, also at 130 S. Highland Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-2337, bootleggersbrewery.com

ERIN DEWITT

A New *Taquería* Is Born

Real Fresh Tacos serves up real-deal Mexican cuisine

LONG BEACH LUNCH
» ERIN DEWITT

On the corner of Pacific Coast Highway and Solana, just west of Pine Avenue, is a little orange-painted gem of a taco joint. The sign still advertises the location's previous business, but back in November, this tiny restaurant opened as Real Fresh Tacos. There are a few parking spaces dedicated to the *taquería*, located just past a large flag emblazoned with the word *birria*, and the dining area, a covered patio with a handful of booths, offers some respite from the gritty hustle of PCH. There's an order window and a pick-up window, and that's about it. It's a simple, no-frills setup—which is fine because food this good doesn't need the distraction of romanticized Mexican décor.

First-timers should stand back and take in the assortment of menus tacked to the walls, framing the order/pick-up windows. Most of them are just sheets of paper with items hand-scrawled in Spanish. Take your time and read them all, or risk missing some of the specials, scattered across five separate pages. Lining the ceiling, there's even some timeworn photos of such disparate items as pastrami fries and cheeseburgers left up from restaurants past. But those can be skipped because this place is for tacos, tortas, enchiladas and sopes.

The tacos, which come an ample four per order, are the classic double-tortilla-cradling-meat-cilantro-and-onions deal. Choices of protein range from all the usual staples (asada, carnitas, pollo, pastor, chorizo) to meats less seen in these parts (lengua, cabeza). Chicharron is also an option. The al pastor here—long-simmered pork served in tender shreds and colored dark with chiles, spices and sweet citrus—was so flavorful that the accompanying teeny-tiny tubs of hot sauce (a fiery rojo or bright verde) remained largely ignored.

The top pick here, however, is Real Fresh Taco's enchiladas, which may be among the best in the city. Your choice of meat is encased in a folded-over (not rolled) corn tortilla and smothered in a blazingly hot black-and-crimson enchilada sauce. The carne asada option gets you a healthy portion of generously marinated, tender beef enchiladas, plus a side of refried beans, golden-colored rice, and a little salad composed of shredded lettuce, tomatoes, pickled onions and a snowing of salty cotija cheese, all topped by a charred whole jalapeño. But what makes this dish a favorite is its sauce: addictively spicy enough to break a sweat, but rounded out by the smoky, toasted sweetness of peppers and spices.

Open daily at 8 a.m., Real Fresh Tacos also offers breakfast selections that include eggs in several different forms (the huevos rancheros will be my next purchased item here), including massive breakfast burritos bursting with eggs, cheese and three different meats. There's also tocino salchicha and even a pancake plate for those craving something sweeter.

Real Fresh Tacos admittedly doesn't look like much from the street, but the flavors this small, family-run establishment serves up are as vibrant as its tangerine-colored exterior. The meats are slow-cooked, the tortillas are supple, and the sauces are thoughtfully complex. In a city where modern fusion restaurants seem to pop up every other day, a new down-home authentic Mexican eatery feels, well, real fresh.

REAL FRESH TACOS
112 W. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach
(562) 513-3323

PHOTOS BY GREG NAGEL

Our New PCH Haunt

Craft House in Dana Point

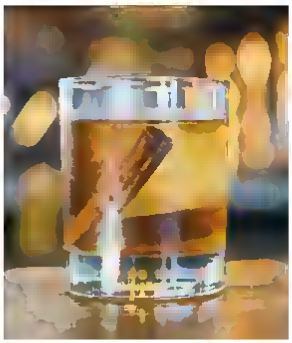
Looking at my plate of "An"Imal Fries at Dana Point's Craft House, I wasn't sure about my plan of attack. Do I dare dip my fingers through the deep barrier of Thousand Island, which is so thick it resembles cable-laid rope? How will I appear to the patrons at the bar, thrusting my fingers into this pile of melty Cheddar, sweet caramelized onions and dressing? Do I pluck from the sides and avoid looking like some sort of madman?

"Fork, please," I say to my server, who delivers with a wink and a nod. "I'll probably need a few extra napkins as well."

As I munched away, I noticed the wall filled with more than 80 whiskeys, complete with various Irish, Japanese, Scotch, Canadian and American variants, most of which can be had for around $10 to $20. If you're feeling like something old and wheated such as Pappy 23, it's on the menu for quite a bit more. On Thursdays, featured whiskeys are 50 percent off, and for an additional two bucks, the bartender can stir you up a proper Old Fashioned. If you're a beer and whiskey fan, $8 gets you a 16-ounce draft beer and shot of Buffalo Trace during social hour, which is all day Monday and Tuesday and from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday. Best deal on PCH? Maybe.

As a sucker for music-themed cocktail names, I go for a "Baby it's Cold Outside" because of the recent controversy surrounding the song. It's stirred perfectly, served in a highball glass with a large cube of foggy ice and cinnamon stick. It's as if all of my favorite liquids got together in one glass to have a party: Templeton rye, Applejack, green chartreuse, Benedictine and bitters. Boozy yet balanced, it harasses me to stay for another.

Craving something gin and fizzy, I next order a Roxanne: a coupe glass with a lavender head, shaken with port wine and Luxardo Maraschino. Sometimes an egg-white-shaken drink can be a little funky on the nose, but this one puts the red light on it. It's totally fruit-forward and somewhat jammy.



Eat & Drink This Now

» GREG NAGEL

The social-hour eats menu is more than just fries and booze. Executive chef Blake Mellgren works with local fish purveyors to deliver the area's freshest catch. On the special menu, $4 gets you a cup of clam chowder that is loaded with smokey bacon, diced potatoes and a creamy broth worthy of sipping from the cup. If shellfish isn't your thing, go for the pork chile verde, which comes with a few tortillas for DIY tacos ($6). Beer or wine your thing? Mason Ale Works' Jambi IPA is $4, and house wines cost just $5.

CRAFT HOUSE
34094 Pacific Coast Hwy., Dana Point
(949) 481-7734, www.eatatcrafthouse.com

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Twitter In Titters

Funny Tweets proves 140 characters count

BY MATT COKER

When I discovered there was a documentary titled *Funny Tweets* featuring Andy Richter, I was all in. I'd followed the *Conan* writer/Conan O'Brien sidekick/*Arrested Development*'s Donnie, Chareth, Rocky, Emmett and Andy Richter for years on Twitter. Why? Because of tweets such as this: "My body is a temple, but it's one of those temples in Thailand where they let monkeys shit all over the place."

A feature-length documentary that mines one brilliant comedic mind such as Richter's would have been fine with me, but *Funny Tweets* is so much more than that. The theme throughout is how relative unknowns parlayed their Twitter one-liners into paid writing gigs and entry into the tight-knit community of online humorists.

Writer/director/producer Laurie McGuinness, whose lone imdb.com credit is *Funny Tweets*, uses as her main subject Dan Duvall, whose two imdb credits include associate producer of the same documentary. He used to be a cashier manager at a Victoria, British Columbia, pharmacy when he began posting tweets to combat boredom. Duvall developed a sizable Twitter following that included struggling comedy writers who would let him crash on their couches during visits to Los Angeles.

Short stays became longer and more frequent—Duvall now bounces between Canada and Hollywood—as he acquired a writing partner, sold scripts, began doing standup and lent his voice to cartoons. With wide-eyed wonder, he says during a talking-head segment that a dream he had never even fathomed while in the Great White North came true because of Twitter.

Comedy veterans such as Richter and *Family Guy* writer/producer Alec Sulkin explain to McGuinness' camera that jokes limited to 140 characters have become the great equalizer, breaking down show-business walls that blocked unknowns such as Duvall from getting noticed.

Yes, funny is funny, and countless writers managed to eventually get recognized for that despite rejection after rejection. But think of how many more gave up their dreams. As one wag puts it in the film, in the past, there was always a production's gatekeeper who either let the writer in (rarely) or kept the writer out (almost always). Thus, it was always up to one person to judge funny. The twitosphere opened the process up to a whole community of judges whose opinions get the attention of Hollywood players.

Such a rise is embodied by Rob Delaney, who is not interviewed for the movie but is referenced. The Bostonian was a relatively unknown standup when he started posting on Twitter in 2009, back when others refused to give away their jokes for free on the internet. But Delaney's sick-and-twisted one-liners, many of which involved his dick, caught the eye of Irish writer/director Graham Linehan, who co-created *Father Ted* and *The IT Crowd*. Linehan began responding to Delaney's tweets, which brought the Irish-American more followers.

In 2010, *Paste* magazine named Delaney one of the 10 funniest people on Twitter, and in 2012, he became the first comedian to win the Funniest Person on Twitter Award at *The Comedy Awards* hosted by Comedy Central. He now has 1.53 million Twitter followers and parlayed his fame into roles in *Deadpool 2* and the hilariously dark sitcom *Catastrophe*, whose fourth season dropped Jan. 8 on Amazon.

The film takes the funny tweet origin story back to the stream-of-consciousness standup of Emo Philips, Mitch Hedberg and Bill Hicks. (I'd toss in Steven Wright and Henny Youngman, who died eight years before Twitter was founded in 2006.)

Speaking of historical significance, you must stick with *Funny Tweets* long enough to hear *Modern Family* writer/producer Danny Zuker's summation of his Twitter exchange with Donald Trump. Or Sulkin climbing from Twitter obscurity to climbing the breasts of a comedy national treasure. (Hint: She loves America.) Or how the platform has, despite the trolls, elevated influencer Elijah Daniel, whose rap alter ego is Lil Pbag, and actress/standup Amber Tozer, whose tweets led to a book deal (*Sober Stick Figure*, Running Press Adult).

Seconds into introducing those who appear in the film, McGuinness effectively displays their bonafides by posting representative tweets. I did the same (to the right), but please read them again during *Funny Tweets*.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

FUNNY TWEETS

was written and directed by Laurie McGuinness. Now available on digital from Upstream Flix.

Elijah Daniel @elijahdaniel

@realDonaldTrump buy me a new BMW, and I won't tell anyone about our night in Hong Kong.

28 Jun 2013

Rob Delaney @robdelaney

My two favorite carpenters of all time are definitely Our Savior Lord Jesus Christ and my neighbor Kevin who lets me use his pool.

24 Nov 2012

Dan Duvall @lazerdoov

If I had to go to prison, I'd chose a women's prison, I guess.

8 July 2015

Andy Richter @AndyRichter

You know those Sex Houses, the little wooden houses with the hole for your dick that people hang in trees? Apparently, those are for birds.

24 Jun 2013

Alec Sulkin @thesulk

"I've got 99 problems, and I'm not dealing with any of them." (Lay-Z)

18 May 2011

Amber Tozer @AmberTozer

Dating is collecting information about someone until realizing you don't like them.

17 Sept 2013

Danny Zuker @DannyZuker

I'm constantly amazed at how different my twin daughters are. Lisa is so much more positive and confident than her sister, Hog Face.

14 Sept 2011

Applaud, You Fools!

BY MATT COKER

FATHOM EVENTS

On the Basis of Sex. In Mimi Leder's new bio-drama, Ruth Bader Ginsburg (Felicity Jones) struggles for equal rights and has much to overcome to become a U.S. Supreme Court Justice. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, 25471 Rancho Niguel Rd., Laguna Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Thurs., Jan. 10, 11 a.m., 1:45, 4:30, 7:15 & 10:05 p.m. $8-$10; also at Regency South Coast Village, 1561 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701. Opens Fri. Call for show times. $8-$11.*

Stan and Ollie. Laurel and Hardy (Steve Coogan and John C. Reilly), the world's most famous comedy duo, try to reignite their film career as they embark on what becomes their swan song: a grueling theater tour of post-war Britain. *Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701. Thurs., Jan. 10, 11:45 a.m., 2:15, 4:45, 7:30 & 9:55 p.m. $8-$11; also at Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Opens Fri. Call for show times. $8-$10.*

Roma. Fnda's Director of the Month is Alfonso Cuarón, which is convenient for him because out now is his new, semi-autobiographical, gorgeously shot black-and-white drama. It follows a year in the life of a young domestic worker (Yalitza Aparicio) and the middle-class Mexico City family she works for in the early 1970s. *The Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, thefridacinema.org. Thurs.-Fri., Jan 10-11 & Mon.-Thurs., Jan. 17, 1:30, 4:30 & 7:30 p.m., Sat.-Sun., 12:15, 3, 5:45 & 8:30 p.m. $7-$10; also at Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701. Thurs., Jan. 10, 9:50 p.m. $8-$11.*

Fight Club. It's a 20th-anniversary screening of David Fincher's satirical tale—from screenwriter Jim Uhls' adaptation of the Chuck Palahniuk story—that tackles (or rather punches) social isolation and spiritual disconnection and the frequently inappropriate ways in which we attempt to alleviate this angst. Brad Pitt stars in lunatic Adonis mode, and Edward Norton co-stars in Edward Norton mode. The fight scenes are not for the weak of stomach. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Jan. 10, 2 & 8 p.m., Sun., 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

Modest Heroes: Ponoc Short Films Theatre, Volume 1. GKIDS and Fathom Events present the U.S. national debut of the animated anthology from Studio Ponoc, the new Japanese animation studio founded by Yoshiaki Nishimura (*The Tale of The Princess Kaguya, When Marnie Was There*). *Modest Heroes* is a collection of tales (by great anime talent): "Kanini & Kanino" (Hiromasa Yonebayashi), "Life Ain't Gonna Lose" (Yoshiyuki Momose) and "Invisible" (Akihiko Yamashita). Attendees also view a behind-the-scenes exclusive on the making of the project. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., Jan. 10, 7 p.m. (dubbed in English). Sat., 12:55 p.m. (in Japanese with English subtitles). $12.50.*

Dry Blood. Horror site Dread Central and rising indie horror distributor Epic Pictures partner to present this new flick about an alcoholic (Clint Carney) trying to dry out in his mountain vacation home. Haunted by ghosts and a sadistic local sheriff, he discovers his cabin has a horrifying past. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 10 p.m., Sat.-Sun., 10:30 a.m., Mon.-Thurs., Jan. 17, noon. $7-$10.*

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. The pioneering midnight movie starts with the car of sweethearts Brad and Janet (Barry Bostwick and Susan Sarandon) breaking down near the eerie mansion of Dr. Frank-N-Furter (Tim Curry). The transvestite scientist's home also hosts a rocking biker (Meat Loaf), a creepy butler (Richard O'Brien) and assorted freaks, including a hunk of beefcake named "Rocky." Live shadow-cast troupe K.A.O.S. performs in Santa Ana, while it's Midnight Insanity in Long Beach. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 11:30 p.m. $7-$10; also at Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435, arttheatrelongbeach.org. Sat., 11:55 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Galaxy Quest. It's a 20th-anniversary screening of Dean Parisot's 1999 send-up of *Star Trek*, trekkers and trekkies. Tim Allen, Sigourney Weaver and Alan Rickman are among those who play current-day stars of 1970s sci-fi show *Galaxy Quest*. The fictional crew is beamed aboard a real spaceship by aliens who took the onscreen exploits literally. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sat., noon, 2, 5 & 7:30 p.m., Sun., noon, 2:30 & 5 p.m. $7-$10.*

The Met: Live in HD: Adriana Lecouvreur. For the first time at the Metropolitan Opera, Anna Netrebko sings the title role of the great 18th-century actress in love with the military hero Maurizio, sung by Piotr Beczala. Cilea's tragedy is sung in Italian with English subtitles. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Sat., 12:55 p.m. (live simulcast); Wed., 1 & 6:30 p.m. (encore). $18-$24.*

***The Death of Superman + Reign of Superman* Double Feature.** DC, Warner Bros. and Fathom Events celebrate the release of *Reign of Superman* by first showing the animated feature that preceded it. In last year's *The Death of Superman*, which takes its title from DC's 1992-93 comic book phenomenon, the Justice League rallies to defeat an unstoppable, otherworldly force known as Doomsday. That leads to an epic showdown with Superman, who tries to save Earth and Metropolis. *Reign of Superman* picks up with Superman's unfathomable death, which prompts four superheroes to arrive in Metropolis in hopes of becoming the next Man of Steel. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Sun., 12:55 p.m., Mon., 8 p.m. $12.50.*

Children of Men. Fnda's month-long Cuarón retrospective continues with the filmmaker's acclaimed 2006 adaptation of P.D. James' dystopian novel. The thriller is set in 2027, when women have become infertile and a former activist (Clive Owen) agrees to help transport a pregnant woman to a sanctuary at sea. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Mon.-Tues., 2:30, 5:30 & 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

Split. Before its sequel *Glass* hits theaters, see M. Night Shyamalan's 2017 horror-thriller about three girls (Anya Taylor-Joy, Haley Lu Richardson and Jessica Sula) who are kidnapped by a man (James McAvoy) with 23 distinct personalities. They escape before frightful No. 24 emerges. *The Frida Cinema; thefridacinema.org. Wed.-Thurs., Jan. 17, 2:30, 5:30 & 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

Bye Bye Birdie. Based on Elvis Presley being drafted into the Army five years before, George Sydney's 1963 musical comedy has a drafted rock & roller (Bobby Rydell) going to a small Ohio town to make his televised "farewell" performance, kiss his biggest fan (Ann-Margret) and—hopefully—perform the new tune of a struggling songwriter (Dick Van Dyke). *Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $9.*

Capote. This month's Thursday Matinee Film Series theme is "About the Author." Philip Seymour Hoffman won the Best Actor Oscar for his portrayal of Truman Capote in Bennett Miller's 2005 biopic, which covers the author's research for his groundbreaking book *In Cold Blood* which was based on a brutal quadruple murder in a small rural town. Bring snacks and beverages, but no booze lest you get the chair. *Fullerton Public Library, 353 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., Jan. 17, 1 p.m. Free.*

Free Solo. In this documentary, see Alex Honnold, without ropes or safety gear, become the first person to ever free solo climb Yosemite's 3,000-foot-high El Capitan Wall, arguably the greatest feat in rock-climbing history. *Art Theatre, arttheatrelongbeach.org. Thurs., Jan. 17, 6 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Incredibles 2. Family Movie Night presents the animated 2018 smash hit from Disney-Pixar and director Brad Bird. Bob Parr/Mr. Incredible (voiced by Craig T. Nelson) takes care of the kids while his wife Helen/Elastigirl (Holly Hunter) is out saving the world. *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., Jan. 17, 6:30 p.m. Free.*

Wonders of the Sea 3D. Co-producers Arnold Schwarzenegger, who also narrates, and Jean Michel Cousteau, who serves as the documentary's main subject, present underwater footage that makes it appear viewers are diving alongside the Cousteau family. Together, they showcase rarely seen sea creatures and too-often-seen ocean threats. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., Jan. 17, 7 p.m. $12.50-$15.*

The Exhibition Room Silent Film Series. The speakeasy, which one enters with a password and through a phone booth, and Long Beach Heritage Museum continue their semi-regular screenings of silent films. Among them are Laurel and Hardy's *Big Business* and Charlie Chaplin's *Sunnyside*. Fine spirits and Roxanne's delightful hors d'oeuvres are served. *The Exhibition Room—Long Beach Craft Cocktails, 1117 E. Wardlow Rd., Long Beach, (562) 826-2940; www.theexhibitionroom.com. Thurs., Jan. 17, 8 p.m. $40.*

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

There's Money In the Lima Bean Stand

The Off Center Festival brings Nigerian women, America's struggling working class, and a Bronx-born Latin musician and poet to the Segerstrom stage

BY JOEL BEERS

No one can argue there isn't a lot of money in lima beans. Just consider the Segerstrom Center, the 14-acre performing-arts complex across the street from South Coast Plaza, which opened in 1986 on land that once was the Segerstrom family farm. It's Orange County's most impressive piece of architecture, ranks among the country's largest performing-arts venues, and is the epicenter of the county's higher-end cultural offerings, with big-ticket Broadway shows, operas, classical music, dance, etc. booked year-round.

And it's a place built, supported and, largely, attended by white people with money, people who love the arts but are not necessarily looking to be challenged, intellectually provoked or exposed to different perspectives.

Which is why the creation of the Off Center Festival eight years ago was so noteworthy. Kind of an answer to New York City's Under the Radar Festival, with whom the Off Center organizers work in curating shows, the festival has brought in dozens of organizations and productions that appeal to a more diverse and adventurous, not to mention younger, crowd.

From the beginning, the festival's catch-phrase was "expect the unexpected." But according to the Segerstrom Center president, no one really knew what it would look like—or if it would even work. "We didn't know what it would be when we started," Terrence W. Dwyer says. "But we knew we didn't want it to be traditional, but forward in its appeal, to bring in interesting, new, talented and contemporary voices. … And I think, over the years, [the festival] has established an identity that is part of a broader range of [the center's] programming that demonstrates artistic excellence, but is also a rather significant opening of the center to a more diverse audience, not just in terms of ethnicity, but age, geography, economics."

While this year's festival is the smallest in terms of productions, the three shows are all wildly different, yet each blends music, theater and no small amount of social community into original and creative works that address more universal concerns.

Each production gets its own weekend. A company from Nigeria starts the festival off with *Hear Now!* This weekend, 10 actresses will combine music and theater to relate fact-based stories of the struggles and victories of women in Africa's most populous nation.

ADAM MAYER

Director Ifeoma Fafunwa was unavailable for comment, but it seems clear that the battle for gender equality isn't just being waged with pink pussy hats.

Next weekend, Flaco Navaja brings to the Costa Mesa stage his *Evolution of a Sonero*. The Bronx-born poet, musician and actor, who performs with a six-person band, plays the *sonero*, a salsa singer who improvises lyrics based on the theme of the song. While the music draws on artists from Janis Joplin to the Doors, from Menudo to Ruben Blades, the play is as much about Navaja's creative evolution as it is about the rhythms of salsa and the eclectic beat of the Bronx.

"The *sonero* draws from experiences, emotions and history to tell his story," Navaja says. "I grew up in the Bronx listening to hip-hop, classic rock, as well as salsa. All these sounds inform my style, and this show is part memoir and part love letter to salsa and the Bronx. It deals with addiction, insecurity, faith, family and the difficulty of navigating an artistic life at an early age."

The quirkiest of the three shows comes to town Jan. 25. Courtesy of Obie-winning playwright and musician Ethan Lipton, *No Place to Go* features Lipton performing with a three-member "orchestra" a combination of songs, spoken word and underscored text that forms a narrative that is part standup and part storytelling related by a man whose company is relocating to Mars.

Written in 2012 after he received a commission from the Public Theater to write a narrative piece of music, the work reflects what was going on at the time, Lipton says.

"The recession was just kicking in, Occupy Wall Street was in full effect, and I found out that the job that had paid my bills for 10 years was moving far, far away," recalls Lipton, who calls the play a kind of 21st-century series of Dust Bowl ballads. "[And] I've always had a fondness for an arch conceit, and when I realized that it felt like the company was moving to Mars, I decided to take that feeling seriously, and I wrote a piece that tries to explore the universal degradation of workers through an absurdist, personal lens."

OFF CENTER FESTIVAL at Segerstrom Center for the Performing Arts, 600 Town Plaza Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2787, www.scfta.org. *Hear Word!* Thurs.-Sat., Jan. 10-12, 8 p.m.; *Evolution of a Sonero*, Thurs.-Sat., Jan. 17-19, 8 p.m.; *No Place to Go*, Jan. 25, 8 p.m.; Jan. 26, 2 & 8 p.m. Each production, $25.

ARTSOVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

Jan. 11-17

INSTRUCTED LIVE FIGURE DRAWING CLASS: A live model will do one long pose for students for three hours. Students must supply their own materials. Fri., 9:30 a.m. $40. 18+. Studio H Fine Art, 2691 Richter Ave., Ste. 108, Irvine, (949) 430-7070; www.studiofineart.com.

WAVES OF WELLNESS WEEKEND: Guests are encouraged to pamper and exercise their way to better health, from yoga to meditation to tai chi. Fri.-Sun. $55-$110. Pasea Hotel & Spa, 21080 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach. (855) 636-6371. meetings.jdvcollection.com/pasea-hotel.

CBD+HEMP POP UP BY SVN SPACE: Local dispensary Svn Space provides samples of its various food products and education on how CBD and hemp are the future. Sat., 11 a.m. Free. Prism Boutique, 406 Termino Ave., Long Beach. (562) 433-4341. www.svnspace.com.

BRUSHTOKES 420 FRIENDLY PUFF, SIP AND PAINT SESSION: A step-by-step class to which guests can bring along their own cannabis or alcohol; food and art supplies will be available. Exact address will be sent upon checkout receipt. Sat., 7 p.m. $40. 21+. BrushTokes, Newport Beach; brushtokes.com.

THE COAST VINTAGE MARKET BLOOD DRIVE: The mobile American Red Cross collects blood alongside the usual roster of vintage and antique vendors. Sun., 8 a.m. Free. The Coast Vintage Market at Saddleback College, 28000 Marguerite Pkwy., Mission Viejo. (949) 381-9347. www.thecoastvintagemarket.com.

KANNABIS WORKS VEGAN FAIR: This weekly event brings various food and merchandise vendors together along with activities and music for the whole family. Sun., 11 a.m. Free. Kannabis Works, 2105 Susan Ave., Santa Ana. (949) 662-3960; kannabisworks.com.

"RAINBOW ROOM": This group exhibition explores the themes of LGBT visibility within the mainstream, as well as the effects of discrimination. Open Mon.-Sat., 8 a.m.-8 p.m., Sun., 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Through Jan. 31. Free. 1888 Center, 115 N. Orange St., Orange. (657) 282-0483; heritagefuture.com/1888-center.

"CHAOS THEORY": Carol Paquet and Sheryl Daena-Chesnut convey the dual qualities of unpredictability and order within nature in their abstract paintings. Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Through May 5. Free. Saka University Founders Hall Gallery, 1 University Dr., Aliso Viejo. (949) 480-4000; www.saka.edu.

SCIENCE ON TAP: COMPUTERS TO ASSIST DESIGNING TECHNOLOGY THAT IMPROVES HUMAN LIFE: Part of an ongoing series, this discussion held by LauAnne Boyd, Ph.D., is suitable for experts and science lovers in the community. Mon., 6 p.m. Free; drinks sold separately. Chapman Crafted Raw, 123 N. Cypress St., Orange. (844) 855-2337. events.chapman.edu.

JANAE MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY

Shout It Out Loud

How Raquel Figlo became OC's rock & roll publicist

BY ALEX DISTEFANO

For many people, a job is a source of income, not of passion. But not for Raquel Figlo, who is not only her own boss, but also following her passions pubhc relations, philanthropy and heavy-metal music

As the CEO of Raquel Figlo Public Relations, Figlo's entrepreneurial spirit shines through, as she works full-time to get publicity and recognition for her growing roster of clients, including many OC-based authors, entrepreneurs, motivational speakers and business owners.

Figlo, who was born in Bolivia, came to the U.S. with her family at the age of 2, her family soon planted roots in Orange County "My family is very important to me; I am still very close to them," she says. "OC is amazing. I just love it—all the people, the cultures. I just feel at home I have met some amazing mentors here, as well. It is a huge part of who I am."

Figlo earned a bachelor's and a master's in communications with an emphasis in advertising from Cal State Fullerton. "It was there that I fell in love with branding and realized that it's so important to everyone," she says. "I enjoyed what I studied in college, I wouldn't have changed anything about it."

After graduating, she began seeking employment in her chosen field. "Of course, after college, you think you're going to get a job, and for some people, they luck out," she says. "But it's a catch-22 because in order to get a job, you need experience, and in order to have the experience, you need to work, so it was difficult at first, but thankfully, I have a wonderful father, and he introduced me to some wonderful mentors who encouraged me to join local associations and get involved in my community"

Around 2007, according to Figlo, she was raising funds for charity and discovered her love of philanthropy "Giving back to the community is something I love being a part of," she says

Figlo has raised more than $100,000 for organizations and nonprofits including the Surfrider Foundation, Olive Crest Kids Foundations and March of Dimes, among others She was also an ambassador to the Women Like Us Foundation (WLUF), an advocacy group giving voice to victims of sex trafficking and domestic violence

Figlo has also devoted a lot of energy and time into representing a diverse roster of clients, among them the Audio Bar OC, Black Flys, comedian Jim Florentine, author Sienna Sinclaire, Dirtbag Clothing and Scorpion Percussion.

Though many of her clients are female, Figlo is hesitant to call herself a feminist. "Feminism is just a word," she says "I am here to empower women and men. But, lately, I have a lot of female entrepreneurs as clients, which is great because I love to see women making a difference."

Figlo's other passion is heavy-metal music; growing up in the OC, the genre played a huge role in her identity "I have been going to concerts since I was 14, [but I've been a] die-hard fan since the age of 7," she says. "My first concert was in 1994—the KROQ Weenie Roast at Irvine Meadows—with my mom."

As a business owner, Figlo could combine her interests in PR and the world of heavy metal. "In addition to working with entrepreneurs and business owners, I also do PR for the music industry specializing in rock and metal. It's an incredible feeling to work with bands like Frosthelm, a black metal band out of North Dakota," she says. "I love intertwining music and PR entertainment and lifestyle brands."

In 2011, she was hired by the now-defunct Key Club in Hollywood as an event manager, and for almost a decade, Figlo has also dabbled in music journalism. "For the past eight years, I have been a writer for *Rock N Roll Industries* magazine," she says. "I also do *Rockin Raquel TV*, my own YouTube Channel [for which] I interview bands."

To date, Figlo has interviewed guitarists Dino Cazares from Fear Factory, Doyle Von Frankenstein from the Misfits, Mina Caputo from Life of Agony, Rob Zombie and others.

Passion and dedication are crucial to Figlo's success, but so is thinking outside of the box when chasing your dream. "It's my passion to be able to work with a variety of clients that I'm passionate about," she says

Figlo says that her innate positivity and optimistic outlook on life are a combination of being spiritual, doing things you love and having fun, as well as staying true to yourself at every level. "We are all unique and all can shine—I truly believe this," she says. "It just so happens that my work is a mix of rock & roll and being professional. At the end of the day, I absolutely love what I do."

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For more information, or to contact Raquel Figlo, visit www.raquelfiglo.com.

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ADRIENNE ISOM

A Brand-New Chapter

Alice Wallace embraces musical storytelling

BY NATE JACKSON

Part of the romance of storytelling is the ability to recount a meaningful chapter from a place of clarity and hindsight. With every chord she strums, you can tell Alice Wallace takes the time to consider the life she's lived and unpack it vividly for the listener at the corner where sweet sound and self-reflection meet. So it's not surprising that she's lived with most of the songs on her fourth album, *Into the Blue* (out Jan. 18), for quite a while.

"It's a very regional album," Wallace says. "Most of the songs, you can hear the influence of California and my touring through the Southwest and the issues that we all think about all the time because, the past few years, it's been hard to escape it."

On the flamenco-tinged ballad "Desert Rose," Wallace recounts a harrowing story she was told one evening by a husband and wife who allowed her band to crash with them in El Paso. "We hang out with this couple in El Paso, and they always put us up at their house, and the gentleman is a firefighter and EMT, and he told us a story about this woman who had come across the border in the night," Wallace says. "She had her baby on the floor of a gas-station bathroom, and it was their job to help her get to a hospital. For him, this was just a normal, everyday occurrence, but I was just floored by it."

It's stories such as this, as well as people and places she encountered throughout her travels, that informed the body of the album. The tracklist carries a mix of songs from the beginning of 2018 and tunes such as "Echo Canyon" that go back as far as 2017. "This album's been a long time in the making, but we've put so much work into it, and I feel like holding back paid off," she says.

One of those benefits was fleshing out her Americana sound with the help of top-tier session players such as bassist Jennifer Condos and drummer Jay Bellerose—renowned rhythm experts who have played and toured with artists such as Alison Krauss and Ray LaMontagne—as well as full string and horn sections. "I do tour a lot with a band, but usually it's a four-piece band, so hearing the songs the way they came out on the album is just incredible," Wallace says.

In the little more than three years since her album *Memories, Music & Pride* came out, the Fullerton folk artist connected with professionals on the business side to better achieve her music goals. *Into the Blue* is being released by new label/production team Rebelle Road, a company spearheaded by Wallace's producer, KP Hawthorn, and her partners Adrienne Isom and Karen Rappaport McHugh, three women who've joined forces to give other women a larger voice in the genres of Americana and folk. "It's been pretty incredible having them work with me," Wallace says. "The three of them all have different talents that all work together."

The trio not only produced the album, but also designed the cover art, website and socials. And they got Wallace gigs at such star-studded events as October's revival celebration of the famous Palomino Club in North Hollywood, where she stood on the stage that once hosted the likes of Dwight Yoakam and Linda Ronstadt.

As momentous as the past year has been, her new track "The Blue" is all about embracing the best yet to come and chasing your dreams in search of the next story to tell.

"I feel like so many people go through the motions, and it's over much more quickly than you think it's gonna be," Wallace says. "So it's important to sail off into the blue and chase your dreams because we only get one chance at this."

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

COURTESY OF 88 FINGERS LOUIE

Friday

RIAS, KILLSET, JABOO AND MICHAEL OF SUNFLOWER DEAD, UNLOVELY CREATURE 7:30 p.m. $10. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

88 FINGERS LOUIE, PULLEY, GO RETTY GO, EKEN IS DEAD 8 p.m. $17. 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

FARTBARF 11 p.m., free, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com.

RANDY ROGERS 7 p.m., $25, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardeoWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

SADGIRL, TROPA MAGICA, THE HURRICANES, JASPER RONES 8 p.m., $15, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

Saturday

THE CINERAMAS 8 p.m., $7, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

88 FINGERS LOUIE, DECENT CRIMINAL 8 p.m., $17, all ages. Gardee Amp, 12762 Main St., Garden Grove, (949) 415-8544, gardeeamp.com.

FELLOW ROBOT, BELLA NOVELLA 9 p.m., $5, 21+. The Prospector, 2400 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, (562) 438-3838, prospectorlongbeach.com.

THE GRABBERS, NICO RONES, MESA LANES 8 p.m., $6, 21+. Gallagher's, 300 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, (714) 951-9229, www.gallagherspchhb.com.

IGNITE 6:30 p.m., $17, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

LATE NIGHT UNION, OCAD POET SOCIETY, GRAVES & THE RAD WEATHER, ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL 8 p.m., $5. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

THE MATTSON 2, MAPACHE 9 p.m., $17.50. 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com.

SNAPCASE, MODERN LIFE IS WAR, GOUGE AWAY, BERTHOLD CITY, PRECIOUS 7:30 p.m., $25, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

Sunday

MELVINS 9 p.m., $25. 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com.

MICK JENKINS, KARI FAUX 8 p.m., $20, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

TERROR AND CRO-MAGS (MINTER WEST FEST) 5 p.m., $20, all ages. Garden Amp's The Locker Room, 12762 Main St., Garden Grove, (949) 415-8544, gardeeamp.com.

Monday

OCR POLLOCK, JAKE TITTLE, LIGHT WIDENING, NEW BALANCE, DEREK TED 8 p.m., free. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

Tuesday

DOROTHY 7 p.m., $25, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardeoWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

Wednesday

CALISAMBA 8 p.m., $5. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

CHIEF KEEF 8 p.m., $30, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

KRS-ONE 8 p.m., $20, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com.

Thursday, Jan. 17

DENT MAY, BLANCONINO, JIMMY WHISPERS, XIN XIN 8 p.m., $10-$12, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

JACQUEES 8 p.m., $22.50, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

LA PRORESKA 9 p.m., free, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com.

REAGAN YOUTH, LUCIDAL, THE FIENDS, UPPER CONNER 8 p.m., $12-$15. 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

SAGETHE GEMINI 7 p.m., $25, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardeoWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

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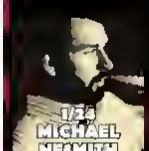
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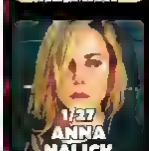
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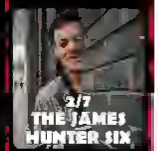
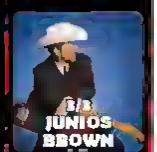

2/7 THE JAMES HUNTER SIX

3/1 TINSLEY ELLIS


3/3 JUNIOR BROWN

3/21 ULI JON ROTH

3/22 THE BLASTERS

UPCOMING SHOWS

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3/27	BRAND X	5/22	WILLIE K
3/28	AL STEWART	5/23	PUDDLE OF MUDD
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3/30	BEATLES VS STONES		
3/31	MORGAN JAMES: From White to Blue, Two Iconic Albums Celebrated	5/25	Music Legend DICK DALE
4/9	BUDDY GUY	5/30	LITTLE RIVER BAND
4/19	An Evening with THE MUSICAL BOX	6/7	ASIA ft. John Payne
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OC WEEKLY Bulletin

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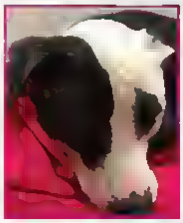
Messages



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Men and Women

I'm a 40-year-old guy with a 30-year-old girlfriend. We've been together a year, and I can see a future with her. But there are problems. This girl comes after two minutes of stimulation—be it manual, oral or penile. As someone who takes pride in my foreplay/pussy-eating abilities, this is a bummer. She gets wet to the point that all friction is lost during PIV and my boners don't last. It's like fucking a bowlful of jelly. Part of me is flattered that I got her off...but damn it, I miss a tight fit! (Her oral skills aren't great, either, so that's not an option, and anal is a no-go.) I love to fuck hard, and that's difficult when I'm sticking my dick into a frictionless void. Is there a way to decrease wetness? Help, please.

Can't Last Inside Tonight

First thing's first: She's not doing anything wrong. CLIT, and neither are you—at least you're not doing anything wrong during sex. (When you sit down to write letters to advice columnists, on the other hand, ...) She can't help how much vaginal mucus she produces or how much vaginal sweating your foreplay/pussy-eating skills induce, any more than you can help how much pre-ejaculate you pump out. (Her wetness is a combo of vaginal mucus and vaginal sweating—the latter isn't a derogatory expression, that's just the term for it.) And all that moisture is there for a good reason. It preps the vagina for penetration. In its absence, PIV can be extremely painful for the fuckee. So the last thing you want to do is dry your girlfriend up somehow.

Now, here's something you *are* doing wrong: "It's like fucking a bowlful of jelly." "I miss a tight fit." "Her oral skills aren't great, either." "I'm sticking my dick into a frictionless void." You're going to need to have a conversation with your girlfriend about this, CLIT—you'll need to use your words, but you can't have that conversation—not a constructive one—until you can find some less denigrating, resentful, shame-heaping words.

Again, she's doing nothing wrong. She gets very wet when she's turned on. That's just how her body works. Too much lubrication makes it harder for you to get off. That's how your body works. And this presents a problem that you two need to work on together, but insults such as "bowlful of jelly" and "frictionless void" are going to shut the conversation down and/or end the relationship. So try this instead: "I love how turned on you get, honey, and I love how wet you get. But it can make it difficult for me to come during PIV."

If you don't put her on the defensive—if you don't make her feel like shit about her pussy—you might be able to have a constructive conversation and come up with some possible PIV hacks. If there's a move (clitoral stimulation) or an event (her first orgasm) that really opens up the tap, CLIT, save that move or delay that event until after you've climaxed or until after you've reached the point of orgasmic inevitability—*if PIV isn't painful for her when she's a little less wet.*

You can also experiment with different positions to find one that provides you with a little more friction and doesn't hit her clit *just so*—perhaps doggy style—and then shift into a position that engages her clit when you're going to come. And there's no shame in pulling out and stroking yourself during intercourse before diving back in. Be constructive, get creative and never again speak of her pussy as though it's a defective home appliance. CLIT and you might be able to solve this (pretty good) problem (to have).

I'm a woman in an open relationship of four years. I adore my partner. When we were first dating, it was casual, and there were no ground rules. During that time, I slept with a guy without condoms after he cornered me in a motel room. One of the biggest rules in my current relationship is to use condoms with other partners. My current partner has made it clear that he would consider exchanging fluids with someone else cheating. I'm worried he'll somehow find out about that night in the motel room, and I feel bad keeping it a secret. If I tell him, there's a chance that our relationship will end, and I'll be living in my car. What should I do?

Burdensome Unbearable Guilt Sucks

This thing happened—or this thing was done to you—before you made a commitment to your current partner, BUGS, and before ground rules were established. I'm assuming you got tested at some point over the past four years; failing that, I'm assuming neither of you has developed symptoms of an STI over the past four years. (And condoms don't protect us from all the STIs out there, so even if you did come down with something, your partner could have passed it to you.) So cut yourself some slack, BUGS. You had unprotected sex under a sadly common form of duress. Fearing something much worse, you "agreed" to unprotected sex—you agreed but didn't freely consent to unprotected sex. Too many men don't understand that kind of fear or the de-escalation techniques women are forced to employ when they find themselves cornered by threatening men—de-escalation techniques that can include "agreeing" to but not freely consenting to sex, unprotected or otherwise. You're under no obligation to tell your current partner about that night, as it took place before you established your ground rules, so it's not really any of his fucking business. And if homelessness is a potential consequence of telling your partner how you were pressured into sex you did not want, then you're lying to him now for the same reason you went bare with that asshole back then: duress.

I'm a man in love with a woman half my age. We met shortly after I had to leave the city I was living in to escape a toxic relationship. I know this girl has feelings for me. My gut screams it. We also share a strange connection. It's something I know she feels. She simply can't help being tied to the energy I'm feeling. A while back, I hurt her. Unintentionally, but it hurt just the same. I was still not over my ex and very leery of ever experiencing that kind of pain in my heart again. The problem now is that this young woman won't acknowledge her feelings for me. She swears she never had feelings for me. We found ourselves alone one day, and her actions were clearly indicating that she wanted to have sex with me, but her words prevented me from taking the opportunity. How can I mock this girl? She knows I love her. I know I'm not wrong. She wants what I want. This love is not something I chose, and I'm beginning to resent it.

In Lasting Love

You *are* wrong. She does not want what you want. Your gut is lying to you. She is not in love with you. You do not share a connection. You need to listen to her words. She is not tied to the "energy" you are feeling. You have got to stop thinking with your dick. She was probably scared out of her wits when you managed to "find" her alone. You cannot reach this woman. She can sense your resentment, and she's afraid of you. In all honesty, ILL, I'm afraid of you. Just as this poor woman most likely fears becoming one of the many women murdered every year by men they've rejected, I fear being the messenger who got shot. But you asked for my advice, ILL, and here it is: *Get into therapy.* You need help. And my advice for her, if she sees this, is to do whatever you must to protect yourself—up to and including moving away.

On the Lovecast *(savagelovecast.com): Who are furries, and what do they want? Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org.*

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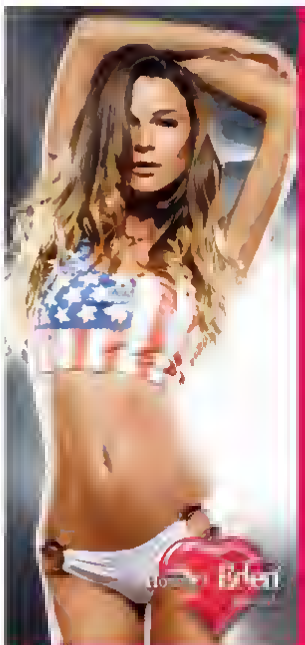

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Skate or Die!

Thirty years later, *Gleaming the Cube* remains one of the most iconic OC films ever made

BY DOUG JONES

One day in the mid-'80s, Hollywood screenwriter Michael Tolkin was driving through Anaheim on the Santa Ana freeway when he suddenly received a disturbing vision of a teenage Vietnamese boy being murdered in a motel room. Perhaps your first thought is that the boy could've been taken hostage in a combative nation at war, but when the maid comes in the next morning and opens the curtains, you are suddenly looking across Harbor Boulevard, revealing a beautiful, sunny view of the Matterhorn bobsleds as the Disneyland monorail passes by. This isn't Vietnam, this is Anaheim, and Tolkin's strange vision would inspire him to write what is perhaps the most Orange County movie ever made.

Gleaming the Cube was released 30 years ago this week. It starred 18-year-old Christian Slater as Brian Kelly, a skateboarder investigating the death of his adopted Vietnamese brother. While not well-received at the time of its release, it has since achieved a loyal cult following through home viewings and streaming services. From its opening scene at the John Wayne Airport to its chaotic final chase alongside Long Beach's Shoreline Drive (which doubled as the San Diego freeway in the film), *Gleaming the Cube* makes Orange County not only a setting in the film, but a character as well. It's a voyage through the seedier side of OC's many suburbs, a totally '80s underbelly full of run-down space-age motels, mallscaped high schools and a never-ending maze of orange groves. America's fast-growing skateboarding trend is promised in the title of the film (the term "gleaming the cube" means for one to achieve cosmic bliss by pushing one's limits to the edge), yet surprisingly to audiences, the story plays out as an intriguing, well-balanced drama surrounding OC's Vietnamese community in Little Saigon.

When Tolkin moved from New York City to Los Angeles, he quickly became fascinated with Orange County. At first glance, its suburban sprawls and tourist destinations appeared to be no more than a generation old, "too new" to have any sort of real history. However, the more time he spent in OC, the more fascinated he became, and the more research he did, the more he realized he was writing something very different that couldn't possibly take place in any other region in the world. Tolkin worked hard to make sure his script reflected OC's vastness, its personality and its culture. Katella, Harbor, Euclid, Bolsa—the movie's dialogue contains a catalog of famous OC street names in Westminster, Garden Grove, Newport Beach and Orange.

Tolkin's affection for Orange County, as well as his attention to detail, is evident throughout the film. For the gravity-defying skating sequences, *Gleaming* enlisted professional skateboarder turned director Stacy Peralta (of the famous Z-boys) to serve as a technical adviser and second-unit director on the film. Peralta then recruited members of his elite Bones Brigade skate team to star in the film as members of Brian's crew, including Mike McGill, Rodney Mullen, Lance Mountain, Mike Vallely, Tommy Guerrero and an 18-year-old, fresh-out-of-high-school kid named Tony Hawk. In the opening of the film, the Bones Brigade descend upon John Wayne Airport's Million Air Club taxiway (a privately owned hangar). After skating around the tarmac, they pay a pilot $80 to take them up for a scenic ride over OC. As they fly over Disneyland, they sing the chorus to "Stukas Over Disneyland" by legendary LA punk band the Dickies, then they aerially scout residential homes for empty pools to skate in. Future lead singer of OC rock band the Aquabats (and creator of the children's television show *Yo Gabba Gabba!*) Christian Jacobs also appears briefly as a character named Gremie.

Gleaming the Cube also uses its Orange County backdrop to show how the "American dream" of the 1950s and '60s, when Disneyland and its surrounding areas were developed, by the late '80s had deteriorated into nihilism fueled by the constant threat of nuclear devastation. The movie was released in 1989, just before the end of the Cold War. The Anaheim motel that the film's grim murder takes place in was the Cosmic Age Lodge on Harbor Boulevard. This was one of three "space-age" Disneyland-adjacent hotels built by Al Stovall beginning in 1964. A past president of Best Western, Stovall jumped aboard America's space-race fascination by constructing "out of this world" hotel experiences for Disney guests using the resources from his copper mine and plastic factories. He also implemented futuristic interior and exterior decorations on his Apollo Inn on West Street (now Disneyland Drive) and Space Age Lodge and the Inn of Tomorrow on Katella. Stovall promised all of his motel guests "moon-level luxury with down-to-earth rates" and a free ride in the "rocketmobile" (a 1960s Volkswagen bus with a rocket strapped to its hood that would shuttle guests to and from the park). By the 1980s, however, the Cosmic Age Lodge was just another seedy motel on Harbor Boulevard, its "moon-level luxury" nowhere to be found. Stovall's Cosmic Age Lodge was demolished in 1997, when construction began on Disney's California Adventure.

Surviving the nuclear war is a theme that runs throughout the film. The movie's school scenes were filmed at Woodbridge High School in Irvine. If you're curious why the school quad in the movie looks so much like the food court at an '80s, two-story mall, then you're on to something. Woodbridge High School was built in 1980 with intentions of it becoming a shopping center if student enrollment got too low. And malls in the '80s were designed to become a place for hundreds to take shelter in the event of a nuclear war. Brian's skateboard-assembling guru named Yabbo (played by Max Perlich) lives in a bomb shelter underneath his house; it's there where the two friends converse. "I mean it's ridiculous to think that there's going to be anything in 30 years, you know," Brian says. "I don't know what's worse: being blown up in a nuclear war or having a 7-Eleven on every corner." The film's alternate title, *Skate or Die*, which it was released as in Norway and Germany, suddenly seems quite poignant.

MERCEDES DEL REAL

Perhaps the most impressive, as well as somewhat unexpected, aspect of the film, however, was its honest portrayal of Orange County's Vietnamese community. In the 1980s, the portrayal of Vietnamese in American films was very much limited to blockbuster war movies such as *Platoon* and *Full Metal Jacket*. *Gleaming the Cube* revealed a much less Hollywood-typical portrait of the culture, centering on a shopping center in Orange County's Little Saigon (the largest Vietnamese American population outside of Vietnam). Actor Le Tuan (who plays Colonel Trac) was very enthusiastic about the way Vietnamese were represented in the script and even served as a technical adviser on the film, helping Australian director Graeme Clifford maintain a sense of authenticity. A major celebration filmed at Balboa's Peninsula Park featured more than 300 Vietnamese extras. When Tuan noticed a detail on set that just didn't seem right, he would bring it to Clifford's attention, and it would be reworked immediately, no questions asked. As well as learning to skateboard in the six months leading up to the film's production, the teen-heartthrob from Manhattan, Slater, also learned a lot about the Vietnamese way of life from co-star Min Luong, who played Tina Trac (his adopted brother's girlfriend): the rules the families set for their children, the way families structure the relationships between parents and children.

In one tense scene, Brian sneaks into the backseat of a car driven by the man he suspects has murdered his brother. As the Lincoln Continental drives through a large orange grove in Irvine Ranch (the grove, which no longer exists, was just off Jeffrey Road), he pops in a mixtape that includes Vietnamese-sung renditions of Motown classics "Nowhere to Run" by Martha and the Vandellas and "Never Can Say Goodbye" by the Jackson 5. Through scenes such as this, the movie shows the evolution of Orange County, from an expanse of orange groves to an atomic-age playground for the white middle class to a land of opportunity for the Vietnamese and other immigrant communities who have made OC their home. Sadly, upon its release, many people dismissed this movie as nothing more than a poor attempt to capitalize on the skateboarding trend of the late '80s. In fact, *Gleaming the Cube* is a surprisingly touching and relevant movie that also serves as a perfect time capsule of Orange County.

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